



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Issue 131 – October 23, 2006

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

AOT is a proud sponsor of many of Arizona's special events, but once in a while a sponsorship opportunity comes along that goes beyond "special" and is truly extraordinary. This was the case with "Right to Risk: A 15-Day Journey Through Arizona's Grand Canyon," a documentary that accompanies eight individuals with disabilities and their guides as they face the daunting challenges of rafting down 225 miles of the Colorado River and wilderness of Grand Canyon. This documentary will be shown on PBS stations throughout the U.S., giving viewers the opportunity to take in the awe-inspiring beauty of Arizona, in addition to meeting Governor Napolitano's goal of reclaiming the Grand Canyon as Arizona's signature landmark. But more importantly, AOT signed on as a major sponsor of this documentary because it proves that anyone can have this once-in-a-lifetime experience and the Grand Canyon is a magical destination without limits and boundaries. "Right to Risk: A 15-Day Journey Through Arizona's Grand Canyon" will air on Wednesday, October 25 at 9 p.m. on Eight, Arizona PBS and I encourage all of you to tune in to witness the inspiration and hope that this documentary captures. You will see men and women with significant disabilities including blindness, cerebral palsy, paraplegia, quadriplegia, spina bifida and multiple sclerosis, share their insights to overcome prejudice and negative attitudes, as they take viewers on a very personal journey through the Canyon. Whether or not you have ever rafted the Colorado River, I guarantee that you will never look at it in the same light after seeing this film. For more information on the broadcast, please visit <http://www.azpbs.org/pressroom/2006/october/risk.htm>.

Have a great week.

Margie R. Ennen

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

AOT Presents “Economic Impact of the Travel Industry in Arizona” Workshop Series

Please mark your calendars for AOT’s newest workshop series, featuring information from the first full-scale “Economic Impact of the Travel Industry in Arizona” report. The economic impact workshops will be held at five locations throughout the state, with each presentation being tailored to the counties that are near that location. The Economic Impact of the Travel Industry in Arizona report features county level travel data on each of Arizona’s 15 counties, which will give communities invaluable information on the amount of spending and number of jobs tied to the travel industry in their area. This type of data is vital for communities to explain the value of the travel industry to key stakeholders and secure funding for tourism programs. The workshops will focus on providing communities with methods for using the valuable information in the report to achieve their objectives. Please see below workshop schedule for which counties will be reported at which workshop. To register for a workshop please contact Sarah Martins at smartins@azot.gov or by phone at 602-364-3687.

November 1, 2006
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Hilton Tucson El Conquistador Golf and Tennis Resort
10000 North Oracle Road
Tucson, AZ 85737
Counties to be covered: Pima, Cochise and Santa Cruz

November 8, 2006
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Pointe Hilton Squaw Peak Resort
7677 North 16th Street
Phoenix AZ 85020
Counties to be covered: Maricopa and Pinal

Trippin with AOT

MLT University

As of part of AOT’s Target Cities campaign, Jennifer Sutcliffe and Kristy McKinnon of AOT’s Travel Industry Marketing Division traveled to St. Paul, MN to attend MLT University put on by MLT Vacations, the package travel operator for Northwest Airlines. MLT University is an event designed to educate MLT’s preferred travel agents on product offered in their wholesale programs. This year the event took place on October 9-12, 2006. AOT was able to conduct pre-show sales calls and met with more than 300 travel agents during the three-day period. For more information, please contact Kristy McKinnon at kmckinnon@azot.gov or 602-364-3696.

Industry News

Join the Club!

Want to be a part of Super Bowl XLII? The Arizona Super Bowl Host Committee Membership Club is your ticket to join the team! As a member of the Arizona Super Bowl Host Committee Membership Club, you will receive official Arizona Super Bowl Host Committee merchandise, discounts and promotional offers from our community partners and the opportunity to win monthly raffle prizes including two (2) tickets to Super Bowl XLII. To find out more info and register online, visit http://www.azsuperbowl.com/membership_club.aspx.

December 31 Deadline for Registering .travel Place Name

The Travel Industry Association of American has been informed that the Place Name Priority Rights that currently allow you to protect your .travel domain name expires on December 31, 2006. After that date, any entity that legally qualifies, commercial or otherwise, can claim these names. If you have not yet registered your .travel domain name and wish to do so, following is a document that outlines the simple steps required to authenticate and register your name.

HOW TO REGISTER YOUR .travel PLACE NAMES

Tralliance Corporation, the .travel Registry, is offering all national governments the sole right to their specific country names and has reserved them in both English and their respective official languages. Though nations will always have the sole right to their country names, this is not the case for place names, which are defined as cities, town, heritage sites, pilgrim centers, sacred sites, national parks/preserves.

1. Between now and December 31, 2006, each government authority for every place must send a letter on their letterhead to Tralliance Corporation to apply for the .travel domain names they would like to claim. Letters should be submitted to:

Manager – Place Names

Tralliance Corporation

220 Fifth Avenue, 20th floor

New York, NY 10001

Please note that any place name not applied for by the December 31, 2006 deadline will be returned to the general pool of domain names, allowing any travel entities that have a legal right to a name to secure unclaimed place names.

2. Once your eligibility is confirmed, you will be sent a Unique Identification Number (UIN) as proof of eligibility. You will next go to an approved .travel Registrar (Go to: <http://www.travel.travel/dnr.htm>) and by entering your UIN where noted, you will be permitted to register your domain name(s). Registrars are businesses that are approved by ICANN to

accept applications for registration of domain names by consumers. Only approved Registrars will be permitted to register .travel domain names.

3. Last, but not least, you will want to establish your profile in the .travel Directory to be sure that your products and/or services can be found in the www.directory.travel global marketplace and appear in the search results at www.search.travel (To enter information in the directory, go to: <http://search.travel/travelsearch/helpnotlisted.do>)

Remember, your priority right to place names expires on December 31, 2006, so register all of your tourism assets as soon as possible! For more information on the .travel initiative, please visit www.travel.travel.

Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain Named #1 Resort in U.S.

The November 2006 issue of Conde Nast Traveler celebrates the 19th annual Readers' Choice Awards. The results are derived from the largest independent poll of consumers' preferences, the Readers' Choice Survey, second in size only to the U.S. Census. With more than 21,000 travelers voting this year, the lists show an even greater global variety and depth. In the category of "Top Resorts in the United States," Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain took the top honor, followed by the Inn at Palmetto Bluff in South Carolina and the Inn at Spanish Bay in California. The complete results of the awards can be found in the November issue, on newsstands October 24th.

Register now! Arizona Tourism Safety and Security Conference

A full-day training conference dedicated to improving visitor and employee safety at tourism destinations and venues throughout Arizona will be presented Friday, November 3rd at the Phoenix Convention Center. This deeper look into safety and security issues and trends within the tourism industry will be valuable to law enforcement and security professionals as well as tourism marketers, meeting planners, tour operators and front line hotel employees. The cost to attend is \$109 before October 20 and includes lunch and all materials. Visit www.AZTourismSafety.com for program details and online registration, or call 602-265-2252. Sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities are also available. Sponsored by Arizona State University's School of Community Resources & Development, the Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association and the Arizona Tourism Alliance

Gas Prices Fall to Lowest Level in '06

The price of gasoline has fallen to its lowest level of the year. The federal Energy Information Administration said Monday that U.S. motorists paid \$2.226 a gallon on average for regular grade last week, a decrease of 3.5 cents from the previous week. Pump prices are now 50 cents lower than a year ago and have plummeted by more than 80 cents a gallon since the start of August. The previous 2006 low for gasoline was set in the first week of January, when pump prices averaged \$2.238. (AP; *Fort Worth Star-Telegram.com/Business*; *Pate 1B, USA Today*)

International Visits Up 4% Through July

More than 4.8 million international visitors traveled to the U.S. in July, an increase of 4 percent over July 2005, according to figures released Tuesday by the Office of Travel and Tourism Industries in the Commerce Department. Visitation to the U.S. was also up 4 percent for the first seven months of the year. The U.S. welcomed 9.2 million visitors from Canada through July, a

6.3 percent increase over the first seven months of 2005. Visits from Mexico were up 24.9 percent, to 3.2 million. Overseas arrivals, not including those from Canada and Mexico, totaled 12.1 million through July, a 1.3 percent decline from the same period last year. Details at 202-482-0140. (*Special to Travel Advance*)

O'Hare Offers New Check-In Service

There's a new option for travelers to park their bags at O'Hare International Airport. For an extra fee, passengers who drive to the airport and park in the economy lots can check in baggage and receive their airline seat assignments and boarding passes at staffed kiosks at the parking lot. Passengers then can board the free airport transit system, or People Mover, ride to the terminals and go directly to security checkpoints and aircraft gates. Airport officials hope the remote skycap service will get passengers on their way quicker and help reduce long lines that form at airline ticket counters. (*Chicago Tribune.com*)

Average US hotel room rates expected to top \$100

Hotel users can expect room rates to rise 6.5 percent next year, despite an expected economic slowdown, according to a new prediction. "Hotel rates will continue to rise aggressively," said Suzanne Cook, vice president of research for the Travel Industry Association of America. She said although some new hotels are being built, demand still exceeds supply in some markets, according to press reports of her speech at a convention in Florida. The average daily room rate at hotels was just over \$90 last year. It is expected to reach \$103 next year. Travel is expected in general to grow by 2.2 percent, Ms Cook said.

Nationwide, she said tourism expenditures are expected to grow 7.5 percent this year to almost \$703 billion. But she added that business travel has slowed as Fortune 500 companies are more closely watching budgets. The outlook for leisure travel is for 2 percent growth this year and up to 2 percent next year, Ms Cook said. (*Travelmole.com 10/17/06*)

Sternlicht Makes Another Move in Luxury Hotels

Little more than 18 months after he left Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Barry Sternlicht is taking another step back into the hotel business--this time with a new luxury brand that aims to combine chic accommodations with an environmentally friendly stance. Sternlicht, chairman and chief executive of closely held real-estate concern Starwood Capital Group, will launch a new luxury hotel company called "I" Hotels & Residences. Designed to compete directly with upscale offerings like Starwood Hotels' St. Regis brand, as well as the Ritz-Carlton and Four Seasons brands, the first "I" is planned for a 2008 opening in Seattle. Other hotels will follow in Scottsdale, Ariz., Paris and at the Mammoth Mountain Ski resort in California. Starwood Capital is unaffiliated with Starwood Hotels. (*Page D14, Wall Street Journal*)